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## **Walter S. Blackburn and Blackburn Architects Architectural Records 1975-2009 DADA 059**

**Title:** Walter S. Blackburn and Blackburn Architects Architectural Records

**Creator:** Walter S. Blackburn and Blackburn Architects

**Inclusive Dates:** 1975-2009

**Extent:** 5.5 cubic feet

**Containers:** 1 MSS box, 1 OVB box, 1 flat file drawer

**Language of Materials:** Materials entirely in English.

### **Preferred Citation:**

Walter S. Blackburn and Blackburn Architects Architectural Records, Drawings and Documents Archive, Ball State University Libraries

### **Biographical Note:**

Born on February 21, 1938 to Dr. Cleo W. Blackburn and Fannie Scott Blackburn, Walter Scott Blackburn was known for his architectural work in Indianapolis and surrounding areas. He lived in his native state of Indiana for a majority of his life. After studying engineering at Purdue University for a time, Walter transferred to Howard University School of Architecture where he graduated in 1963. It was here that he met his future wife and business partner Alpha Coles. They would go on to have three children: sons Chi and Anthony and daughter Sydney. After graduating, the couple moved back to Indianapolis, where Walter wanted to open his own firm. In 1967, he became a registered architect and finally started Blackburn Architects with Alpha in 1981.

Walter and Alpha both won national awards for their work and were recognized for their accomplishments. Walter would go on to receive numerous awards and positions including: the title of Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1990, the Distinguished Alumni Award from Howard University along with Alpha, the 1998 Edward Pierre Award from the Indiana chapter of the AIA, visiting professor at Ball State University, and member of the Board of the National Institute of Building Sciences in 1992. As an African-American architect, he chaired the AIA's Diversity Taskforce in 1992 and was soon promoted to Vice President. Some of his

most respected works are the Grace Apostolic Church, the Artsgarden at Circle Center, and the RCA Dome, all of which are in Indianapolis. One of the final projects Walter completed was the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, a commission he and Alpha won. In addition to his work as an architect, Walter was an active member of the Indiana Arts Commission. He passed away on August 9, 2000.

Blackburn Architects' work encompassed a wide range of design services including architecture, planning, interior design, and public art planning. Their clients included universities such as Butler and Purdue, public schools, churches, hospitals, and transportation organizations. The firm as a whole has been awarded several honors for their designs. Alpha took over as President of Blackburn Architects once Walter passed away, but the firm has now closed.

**Sources Used:**

- "A Celebration of the Life of Walter Scott Blackburn." Obituary. 14 August 2000. Walter S. Blackburn and Blackburn Architects Architectural Records, Drawings and Documents Archive, Ball State University Libraries.
- Blackburn Architects. "Snapshot." Firm Informational Booklet. Walter S. Blackburn and Blackburn Architects Architectural Records, Drawings and Documents Archive, Ball State University Libraries.
- "Walter S. Blackburn Award." AIA Indiana. Accessed 6 December 16.  
<http://aiaindiana.org/walter-s-blackburn-award>

**Scope and Contents:**

This collection contains drawings, preservation plans, project files, and an extensive digital born collection relating to the work of Walter S. Blackburn and his firm Blackburn Architects between the years of 1975 and 2009. Large drawings, either from design development phases or construction bid packets, can be found for a few of Blackburn's more prominent works which includes the Grace Apostolic Church, the RCA Dome and Convention Center Renovation, and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. Some booklets on preservation planning projects involving the city of Indianapolis, specifically for the Lower Center Canal, Lockerbie Square, the North Meridian Corridor, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street, and the Indianapolis Cultural Trail, give insight to Walter's involvement in urban planning.

The digital collection includes over 80 CDs with various file formats. A wide variety of projects can be found in this collection, ranging from the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center to the Lilly Research Laboratory. The type of content available depends on the project, but common documents include AutoCAD drawings and letters of correspondence between parties involved. This collection is still being processed, but can be accessed at the Drawings and Documents Archive until completion.

**Conditions Governing Access:**

This collection is open for research.

**Copyright Notice:** Legal title, copyright, and literary rights reside with Drawings and Documents Archive, Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University Libraries, Muncie, IN. All requests to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted to Drawings and Documents Archive.

**Custodial History:**

The Walter S. Blackburn and Blackburn Architects Architectural Records were received by Drawings and Documents Archive as a donation from Alpha Blackburn on 2016/08/12.

**Accruals:** No additions are expected.

**Processing Information:**

Collection processing completed

Finding aid created 2016/12/06 by Ashley Danielson

**Arrangement:**

The Walter S. Blackburn and Blackburn Architects Architectural Records are arranged chronologically.

**Controlled Access Headings:**

Architecture, American

Architecture--Indiana--Indianapolis

Architecture, commercial

Drawings, architectural (visual works)

Elevation drawings

School buildings

Documents

Blackburn, Walter S. (1938-2000)

National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (Cincinnati, Ohio)

Museums

National museums

Football stadiums

Convention facilities.

African American architects.

American Institute of Architects.

- Catalog no.* 59-001 *Storage code(s)* MSS 1  
*Project title* Walter S. Blackburn photograph, funeral program, clipping, office ephemera, ca. 2000  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* Walter S. Blackburn 001; ca. 2000  
*Records* >> 1 MSS folder: 1 Black and white photograph, 1 newspaper clipping, 1 funeral program, 1 negative, 1 sticker, 1 lapel pin
- Catalog no.* 59-002 *Storage code(s)* MSS 1  
*Project title* Blackburn Architects promotional materials, ca. 2000  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* Blackburn Architects 002; ca. 2000  
*Records* >> 1 MSS folder: 2 pamphlets with metal bookmarks, 1 color brochure, 1 color spiral bound informational booklet
- Catalog no.* 59-003 *Storage code(s)* MSS 1  
*Project title* Lower Central Canal Preservation booklet, 1975  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana 003; 1975  
*Records* >> 1 MSS folder: 1 bound booklet
- Catalog no.* 59-004 *Storage code(s)* MSS 1  
*Project title* Lockerbie Square Preservation Plan booklet, 1978  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* Department of Metropolitan Development Division of Planning and Zoning, The Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission, Perry Associates, Architects and Planners; 1978  
*Records* >> 1 MSS folder: 1 bound booklet
- Catalog no.* 59-005 *Storage code(s)* MSS 1  
*Project title* North Meridian Corridor Development Plan booklet, 1981  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development and Near North Development Corporation North Meridian Corridor Steering Committee ; ca. 1981  
*Records* >> 1 MSS folder: 1 bound booklet
- Catalog no.* 59-006 *Storage code(s)* MSS 1  
*Project title* Indiana Convention Center and RCA Dome, 1982  
*Location* South Capitol, Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* BDPM (Browning, Day, Pollak, Mullins); HNTB (Howard, Needles, Tammen, Bergendoff); 1982  
*Records* >> 1 MSS folder: 1 booklet

- Catalog no.* 59-007 *Storage code(s)* MSS 1  
*Project title* Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street enhancement program booklet, 2004  
*Location* Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street, Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* 2004  
*Records* >> 1 MSS folder: 1 Black and white photograph, 1 newspaper clipping, 1 funeral program, 1 negative, 1 sticker, 1 lapel pin
- Catalog no.* 59-008 *Storage code(s)* MSS 1  
*Project title* Project files: Indianapolis Convention Center, 2007-2008  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* Blackburn Architects, RATIO Architects; 2007-08  
*Records* >> 1 MSS folder: 1 Black and white photograph, 1 newspaper clipping, 1 funeral program, 1 negative, 1 sticker, 1 lapel pin
- Catalog no.* 59-009 *Storage code(s)* MSS 1  
*Project title* Project files: Indianapolis Cultural Trail, 2007-2009  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* Blackburn Architects, M12, Acconci Studio, Jorge Pardo Sculpture, Arts Council of Indianapolis; 2007-2009  
*Records* >> 2 MSS folders: project files
- Catalog no.* 59-010 *Storage code(s)* ff  
*Project title* Grace Apostolic Church, architectural drawings, 1989  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* Blackburn Associates Architects, Guthrie and Woehler; 1998  
*Records* >> Architectural drawings, 25 sheets
- Catalog no.* 59-011 *Storage code(s)* ff  
*Project title* Indiana Convention Center and RCA Dome Phase IV Expansion, design development drawings, 1998  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* Blackburn Architects, Inc., BDMD (Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf); 1998  
*Records* >> Design development drawings, 3 sheets
- Catalog no.* 59-012 *Storage code(s)* ff  
*Project title* Grace Apostolic Church roof repair and model, architectural drawings, 1999  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* MAS Associates, L.L.C., ARSEE Engineers Incorporated; 1999  
*Records* >> Architectural drawings, 8 sheets

*Catalog no.* 59-013 *Storage code(s)* ff  
*Project title* Indiana Convention Center, architectural drawings, 1991-1998  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* Blackburn Architects, BDMD (Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf); 1991-98  
*Records* >> Architectural drawings, 19 sheets

*Catalog no.* 59-014 *Storage code(s)* ff  
*Project title* Indiana Convention Center and RCA Dome renovation of common areas at Halls F and G, architectural drawings, 2000  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* Blackburn Architects, Inc.; 2000  
*Records* >> Design development architectural drawings, 7 sheets

*Catalog no.* 59-015 *Storage code(s)* ff  
*Project title* IUPUI Multicultural Center, concept plans, 2009  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* Blackburn Architects; 2009  
*Records* >> Concept plan drawings, 11 sheets

*Catalog no.* 59-016 *Storage code(s)* ff  
*Project title* IUPUI Multicultural Center, construction documents, 2009  
*Location* Indianapolis, Marion, IN  
*Authorship, year* Blackburn Architects; 2009  
*Records* >> 90% construction documents, 35 sheets

*Catalog no.* 59-017 *Storage code(s)* ff  
*Project title* National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, 1999-2002  
*Location* 312 Elm Street, Cincinnati, Hamilton, Ohio  
*Authorship, year* Blackburn Architects, Boora Architects; 1999-2002  
*Records* >> preliminary sketches- 11 sheets, 11x15 inches, 18x18 inches  
schematic designs- 48 sheets, 20x16 inches  
design development- 115 sheets, 18x24 inches  
bid package- 104 sheets, 18x24 inches